

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: COUNTRY PLAN: BILATERAL COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP

REF: USIA 4347, USIA 5898

1. I. SWEDEN IS A DEMOCRATIC, TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED NATION WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S HIGHEST STANDARDS OF LIVING. IT HAS HISTORIC TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES WHICH WERE BROADENED BY THE LARGESCALE EMIGRATION BEGINNING IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. THERE IS CONSTANT, PRONOUNCED INTERACTION BETWEEN SWEDEN AND THE U.S. CONTACT IS MAINTAINED BY TRAVEL, SWEDES STUDYING IN THE U.S., INFORMATION AVAILABLE BY WAY OF A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND A MASS MEDIA APPARATUS APPROPRIATE TO AN ADVANCED NATION AND AN OPEN SOCIETY. THE AGONY OF THE VIET NAM PERIOD IS OVER AND ON A SUPERFICIAL LEVEL, AT LEAST, THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ARE OPEN SO THAT THE MISSION MAY PROGRAM SPEAKERS, HOLD SEMINARS, SHOW FILMS, MAKE VISITS, HAVE CONTACTS, ETC. ACROSS THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF SWEDISH SOCIETY. OUR INFORMATION IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SWEDISH MEDIA, TARGET GROUPS ARE OFTEN RECEPTIVE TO OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE SWEDISH UNDER-FORTIES ARE ENAMoured OF
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U.S. POPULAR CULTURE AND APE OUR DRESS, IMITATE OUR INSTITUTIONS, EMULATE OUR TECHNIQUES SO THAT INCREASINGLY THE AMBIVALENCES FELT ARE COMING DOWN FAVORABLY ON OUR SIDE.

2. BUT THE BASIC COMMUNICATION TENSIONS, ESPECIALLY OVER A LONGER TIME FRAME, ARE DEEPER THAN THAT.

IN A PARTICULARLY IRONICAL WAY SWEDEN IS HOLDING US RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE SWEDEN FELT THAT IN THE VIET NAM WAR--AND MORE RECENTLY AND LESS STRONGLY ON OTHER ISSUES--AMERICA WAS NOT BEING TRUE TO ITSELF. SWEDEN WASN'T INVOLVED IN VIET NAM BUT IT SAW AMERICA AS NOT LIVING UP TO SHARED IDEALS AND SO IF WE WEREN'T BEHAVING PROPERLY OUR ACTIONS THREATENED THE VALIDITY OF THEIR IDEALS. WE ARE DEALING HERE WITH A QUESTION OF PERCEPTION. AND THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN AVOID SWEDES HOLDING US RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR READING OF US HISTORY, INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES. AND IT IS HERE THAT THE RUB COMES.

3. WE HAVE THE OPPOSITE OF A LACK OF INFORMATION. IF ANYTHING THERE IS TOO MUCH. WE CAN NEVER SUCCEED IN HIDING FROM THEM OUR WEAKNESSES; WE CAN, HOWEVER, INFLUENCE THEIR "READING" OF, PROVIDE CONTEXT, PERSPECTIVE TO, WHAT WE ARE DOING. TO THE FAMILIAR TECHNIQUES OF BUILDING UPON PROVEN COMMONALITY WE MUST ADD AN HONEST DELINEATION OF DEFERENCES IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THE US IS A WORLD POWER, WITH WORLD RESPONSIBILITIES; SWEDEN IS NOT. SO WHEN A SWEDISH LEADER SAYS THEY ARE REALLY AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT NOT JUST OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, BUT OF ANY NEW NUCLEAR WEAPON WE MUST ANSWER THAT THAT IS A LUXURY OF ESCAPISM WE CANNOT AFFORD. WHEN SWEDES INDICATE CLEARLY THAT THEY FEEL WE UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE REMISS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT OUR NATIONAL MEDICAL CARE, TREATMENT OF THE AGED; UNEMPLOYMENT; WELFARE, JOB SECURITY, TREATMENT OF MINORITIES, ECT. IS UNWORTHY, NOT JUST OF OUR PRETENSIONS BUT OF OUR IDEALS, WE MUST MAKE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BUT ALSO DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY THAT OUR PROBLEMS ARE MORE COMPLEX, OUR RESPONSIBILITIES MORE DIFFUSE AND UNTRACTABLE THAN SWEDEN'S AND THAT THE CHARGE IS, INDEED, CONSIDERABLY EXAGGERATED. WITH OUR ALMOST SUFFOCATING CULTURAL OMNIPRESENCE, IT IS VITAL FOR SWEDISH INTEGRITY, SELF-IMAGE THAT THEY FEEL SUPERIOR TO US IN SOMETHING.

4. THE CONVENTIONAL CHANNELS THEMSELVES ARE OPEN BUT THE UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS COMPLETELY DWARF GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS, RELAXED, EVEN WARM, AS THEY HAVE BECOME. IT IS NOT ILL WILL OR COMMUNIST INFLUENCE THAT GIVES PLAY TO NEGATIVE STORIES ON THE US IN SWEDISH NEWSPAPERS AND TV. IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES THE STORIES AR PLAYBACKS FROM THE US WARTS-AND-ALL MASS MEDIA. "IS IT NOT JUST OUR OPINION; YOUR OWN MEDIA SAYS SO." THE SWEDISH MEDIA IS BOTH INTELLIGENT AND SOPHISTICATED BUT FREQUENTLY BIASED. OFTEN

THERE IS A BLURRING BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTION OF AN
EVENT AND A VALUE-JUDGMENT ABOUT THE EVENT. THE
INDIVIDUAL REPORTER, EVEN EDITORIAL WRITER, HAS A PRIVATE/
PUBLIC IDENTITY TO MAINTAIN AND IS FIERCELY DETERMINED
THAT HIS OUTPUT IS MARKEDLY, NOTICEABLY HIS OWN. THIS
ALL MEANS THERE IS VERY LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR DIRECT
PLACEMENT; INFORMATION MAY BE PLACED AT HIS DISPOSAL
BUT ANY CROWDING IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

5. II. BUT WE HAVE IMPORTANT ASSETS ALSO. IN MANY CASES
THEY ARE THE CONVERSE OF OUR LIABILITIES. WE BEGIN
WITH A POOL OF SHARED BASIC VALUES. THE IMPORTANCE OF
THIS CANNOT BE EXAGGERATED. WHILE THE SWEDISH PREOCCU-
PATION WITH EVERYTHING FROM THE STRATEGIC STANCE OF
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THE US AS A WORLD POWER TO THE MINUTIAE OF OUR SOCIETY
AND POPULAR CULTURE MAY AT TIMES BE EXCESSIVE, EVEN
GALLING WHEN THEY GET IT WRONG, WE DO NOT HAVE TO PROVE
THAT WHAT WE DO IS RELEVANT OR IMPORTANT. OUR IMPORTANCE
IS A GIVEN IN BILATERAL COMMUNICATION. AND, BASICALLY
WE CAN DIALOGUE IN ENGLISH. SWEDES DO HAVE STRONG
OPINIONS BUT THEY TAKE THEIR ENLIGHTENMENT SERIOUSLY
AND THEY DO WANT TO KNOW. ABOVE ALL, THEY WANT TO
BE RIGHT.

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6. SECONDLY, WHILE IT MAY BE UNCRACIOUS TO SAY SO, SWEDEN'S PRESENT DOMESTIC PROBLEMS CAN, IN MOST CASES, BE REGARDED AS A COMMUNICATION ASSET. HER CASE IS BECOMING LESS SPECIAL, MORE AKIN TO THE REST OF THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED WORLD. THE PROBLEMS ARE MORE COMPLEX, NOT SO SUSEPTIBLE TO THE READY SOLUTION: INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, THE SOCIAL COST OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS I.E., NUCLEAR ENERGY; YOUTH CRIME; EQUITABLE TREATMENT FOR MINORITIES; THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY, FOR A SMALL COUNTRY, OF A TECHNOLOGICALLY-ADVANCED DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT; MORE OR LESS, SOCIALISM. YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL. SOME THINGS ARE GOING TO BE NOT DONE AND OTHERS DONE LESS WELL THAN THEY OUGHT BE. IF ONLY COMPARATIVELY A SLACKENING IN THE PACE OF THE FAMILIAR RUSH TO JUDGMENT CAN BE PREDICTED AND SHOUD WOULD TO OUR BENEFIT.

7. THIRDLY, A SOLID NETWORK OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS ALREADY EXIST. THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES, SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITIES, ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE COMMUNITIES ARE OF THEIR OWN ACCORD AND TO FURTHER THEIR OWN INTERESTS IN CONSTANT, INCREASING COMMUNICATION. NOT JUST OUR EXCHANGE
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PROGRAMS, BUT SWEDISH EXCHANGE PROGRAMS ARE "WORKING THE TWO-WAY STREET". AND REQUESTS FOR FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE FROM INDIVIDUALS FROM IMPORTANT TARGET GROUPS ARE ALMOST MORE THAN WE CAN HANDLE.

8. COMPARED WITH MANY COUNTRIES, THE GOALS OF THE SWEDISH-US EXCHANGE COMMISSION AND THE GOALS OF USIS SWEDEN ARE MOST OFTEN PARALLEL WHEN THEY ARE NOT IDENTICAL. WE ARE DETERMINED TO AVOID CLUMSINESS ON OUR PART, DISREGARD FOR THE PROPRIETIES OR IN ANY WAY SEEK TO LIMIT THEIR OPTIONS. THIS DOES NOT SEEM IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH. BUT BILATERAL COMMUNICATION, LISTENING NOT JUST TALKING, LEARNING NOT JUST TEACHING IS NOT THE PRIVATE PRESERVE OF FORMAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. OUR US VISITORS, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL, ARE OF HIGH QUALITY. WHETHER IN ONE-ON-ONE SITUATIONS OR IN SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, PRESS AND TV INTERVIEWS OR IN CONSULTATIONS ON SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL PROFESSIONAL CONCERN, WE ARE "INFORMING (OURSELVES) ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD." IF YOU DON'T LISTEN, YOU DON'T GET TO TALK, IF YOU'RE NOT PREPARED TO LEARN YOU WON'T GET YOUR CHANCE TO TEACH: SWEDES DON'T REGARD THEMSELVES AS ACOLYTES AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE HIGH PRIEST WITH THE WORD.

9. III. WHAT WE PLAN TO DO: BY EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND VIEWPOINT, BE ACCESS TO THE MASS MEDIA AND KEY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND BY THE ORGANIZED AND SOPHISTICATED USE OF VISITING AMERICANS AND THE MISSION STAFF WE INTEND TO EXPLAIN US WILLINGNESS TO LOOK IN THE FACE THE DIFFICULT COMMON PROBLEMS SHARED BY TWO HIGHLY TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AND DEMOCRATICALLY INCLINED SOCIETIES. THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF THE SWEDISH UNCLASSIFIED

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INSTITUTIONAL AND INFLUENCE STRUCTURE, WE ARE TAILORING A SERIES OF PROGRAMS WHICH DEAL WITH FOREIGN POLICY BUT ALSO WITH ISSUES OF MUTUAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC-HUMANISTIC AND SCIENTIFIC CONCERN.

10. THESE PROGRAMS WILL USE AS INSTRUMENTS OUTREACH, VISITING LECTURERS, BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, FILMS, SEMINARS, USG SPOKESMEN, THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM, THE FULL PANOPLY OF MASS MEDIA TOOLS SUCH AS FILMS, VTRS, TV INTERVIEWS AND ABOVE ALL FACE-TO-FACE, ONE-ON-ONE CONTACT. ACCOUNTABILITY IS BEING BUILT INTO THE COMPUTERIZED ARS SYSTEM IN EFFECT AT THIS POST SO THAT WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING BY HAVING SOME IDEA WHERE WE HAVE BEEN. AMONG THE PROGRAM AREAS PLANNED AND SUSCEPTIBLE TO ICA INFLUENCE, ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A. POLITICAL/SECURITY. THE US, NATO AND EUROPEAN SECURITY. SWEDEN, SCANDINAVIA, AND THE NORDIC BALANCE.

B. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

C. FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION, ADVOCACY JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY.

D. ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND SOCIAL COST, I.E., ENERGY; TECHNOLOGY.

E. CULTURAL VALUES AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN SWEDEN AND THE US.

11. THE AMBASSADOR HAS SEEN AND APPROVED THE FOREGOING. RICCIO

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